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By Hayward



100

By ANNE LISLE

CHAPTER 728

There was a note of explosive energy in her suggestion, and I acted upon it. We both got tremendously busy at once, pulling out drawers and gathering up silver and linens, unwrapping packages, selecting china and glassware, slicing bread, chopping ice, arranging the food on platters and tables. I flung myself into the task and said no word that didn't have to do with such matters as the whereabouts of the ice pick or the kind of place plates Betty wanted used.

When at last everything was in order and the coffee set back on the stove to keep hot, we went into the dining room and fell upon our respective beds. The appetite our labors had earned. All through the little supper our talk remained on the surface of things, but part of my mind was wrestling with the situation. I felt sure that Betty also was thinking of things deeper than she discussed. At last she pushed back her empty coffee cup, folded her arms in front of her in the table and looked me squarely in the eyes.

"Have you decided what to do about me?" she asked.

"I've decided to carry out my plan of offering you a job," I replied, parrying her question with an implied one of my own.

"I need to go to work, don't I?" asked Betty simply. "Our affairs are badly involved. We haven't much ready cash, have we?"

Ignoring that aesthetic and unconscious "we," I replied, with no attempt to run away from facts.

"Your affairs are involved in Jim's. I don't now how much you've guessed. I don't know how much Jeanie has told you, but I'm working—and making a go of it. Jim's down at Moscow, trying to save his fortune and that of the friends who invested through him. It broke his heart to think that if he failed you folks would go with him."

"He'd hate it more than ever, now I'm alone," commented Betty almost idly.

"Yes," I agreed. "It's all complicated. We'll go into it later. But right this minute I've a going concern and have only one partner. I need another. You could learn the business in next to no time. It would be a favor to me, and it would put you beyond any present need."

"And when I'm back here he won't have me on his mind—he won't feel that I'm a pensioner on his bounty," commented Betty shrewdly.

"It won't come to that. Jim will pull through," I replied.

"But it hasn't any extra burdens," said Betty quickly. "But if you're a going business, you're not a burden —"

"No; I am an asset," I smiled.

"And you've room for me?"

"Room and the need," I said.

"Virginia wouldn't particularly approve, would she?" Betty asked quickly.

"Probably not," I confessed. "She hated to see me 'go into trade.' She'll loathe seeing me drag you in."

"That won't matter," Betty replied with amazing consciousness. "I gave her clearly to understand that if I couldn't get off my daze and the terrible dependence, that's chaining me and making a parasite of me—I'd go to pieces."

"I couldn't stay there and graft on her and Pat. I forced her to see it. She gave in to my coming home. She saw the wisdom of our living together. She'll fill us up perfectly. There isn't a loose thread in this chaining me and making a parasite of me—I'd go to pieces."

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(To Be Continued)

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WILLARD 10-27

A cartoon by Edwina. A woman in a nightgown and slippers is peeking out from behind a closed door. She has a speech bubble that says "WELL, MY LANDS!". A dog is standing in the hallway, barking "WOOF" at the door. The signature "(A) EDWINA" is in the bottom left corner.

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By Edwin

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EDWIN

By DWIG



A political cartoon by John Henry. An elderly woman, representing Europe, sits in a chair with "EUROPE" written on her skirt. She is surrounded by a massive, overflowing pile of papers labeled "BILLS" and "DEBTS". A small dog sits on the floor in front of her, looking up at her. The scene is set in a room with a fireplace and a broom leaning against the wall. The cartoon is signed "John Henry" in the bottom right corner.

By DONAHUE